Department of Finance

News Release

Immediate release

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Canada's New Government Investing in Safe, Secure Communities

The Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance, today highlighted an important Budget 2007 initiative designed to make Canada's communities even safer. The Government is providing $1 million to the Canadian arm of the International Association of Fire Fighters to help implement a hazardous materials training program for dealing with emergencies.

"The safety of our communities is a top priority", said Minister Flaherty, speaking from the Main Fire Station in St. Catharines, Ontario. "Canada's New Government is helping to ensure that firefighters and other first responders have the training they need to safely and effectively respond to hazardous material emergencies, including those involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials."

"Canada is admired the world over as a safe, law-abiding society," said Public Safety Minister, the Honourable Stockwell Day. "Our Government is taking decisive steps to provide better security – and peace of mind – to Canadians across this country."

The new training initiative, the first such program in Canada, was welcomed by the International Fire Fighters Association (IAFF) and the St. Catharines Fire Department.

"With the announcement in Budget 2007 to fund the IAFF's training programs in Canada, the Conservative government has demonstrated that it's serious about public safety and about protecting Canadians and Canadian first responders from the aftermath of a haz-mat or CBRN incident," said Bruce Carpenter, a St. Catharines fire fighter and the IAFF's 13th District Vice President, representing Ontario and Manitoba.

St. Catharines Assistant Fire Chief Ed Lajoie said, "St. Catharines and its Fire Services applaud this new training program, and the advocacy role of the IAFF, which will significantly enhance the safety of our firefighters, members of the Niagara Regional CBRN Team and the people of St. Catharines."

The hazardous materials training program will be available to all first responders including firefighters, police, paramedics and utility workers. The funding will be devoted to providing course materials and to beginning "train-the-trainer" sessions across Canada.

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Budget 2007 also takes additional important steps to significantly enhance Canadians' security including measures to help prevent crime and to ensure that the security, intelligence and corrections systems are strong through initiatives such as a new National Anti-Drug Strategy to crack down on gangs, combat illicit drug production, prevent illicit drug use and treat illicit drug dependency.

Other key public security measures in Budget 2007 include an additional $6 million per year to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to protect children from sexual exploitation and trafficking; improving front-end screening of first-time firearms licence applicants; and investing $80 million over two years to make the Canadian Security Intelligence Service's operations more effective.

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